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MONODY

ON
THE DEATH OF

The Death of the

RIGHT HONOURABLE

CHARLES JAMES FOX.

By *RICHARD PAYNE KNIGHT.*

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ΑΝΗΡ ΤΩΝ ΚΑΘ' ΕΑΥΤΟΝ
ΑΡΕΤΗΙ ΤΕ ΟΥΔΕΝΟΣ ΎΣΤΕΡΟΣ,
ΚΑΙ ΚΡΑΤΙΣΤΟΣ ΕΝΘΥΜΗΘΗΝΑΙ ΓΕΝΟΜΕΝΟΣ,
ΚΑΙ Α ΑΝ ΓΝΟΙΗ, ΕΙΠΕΙΝ.

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TO THE
ANNUAL

MONODY.

WHILE lingers yet the sigh o'er NELSON heav'd,—
Yet bloom the garlands round his trophies weav'd,
A Loss more grievous—sorrows more severe
Weigh on the heart, and urge the falling tear.
For, bright as glory glitters round his urn,
At other shrines its lamps with lustre burn :
Still valour's blaze illumines Britain's skies;
And Stars that set leave other Stars that rise :
But talents to direct its erring force,
And guide th' eccentric lightning in its course ;
Its powers to ascertain, its means provide,
And turn to peaceful ends war's wasteful tide,
In vain we look for:—the extinguish'd Light,
Deepen'd by contrast, leaves the shades of night.

Then while around the clouds of darkness roll,
As one vast empire spreads from pole to pole ;
Crush'd by its weight, while Taste and Science fall,
And thickening dulness slowly covers all ;
Ere yet, benumb'd in one cold mass, mankind
To servile torpor yield all power of mind ;

Ere silence reign in universal sleep,
 Let FREEDOM's faltering voice her HERO weep;
 Breathe her last sigh to consecrate HIS name,
 And in her last sad lay HIS worth proclaim.

Yes, mighty Genius! though a thankless age,
 Blinded with prejudice and drunk with rage,
 Despis'd thy warning voice, and madly hurl'd
 In slavery's yawning gulf a frantic world:
 Still wisdom's light shall glimmer round thy tomb;
 Still shall thy sense illuminate the gloom;
 And, on the wreck of all thou wouldst have sav'd,
 Display, in notes indelible engrav'd,
 Th' immortal relicks of that godlike mind
 Which liv'd to teach, and toil'd to serve mankind.

Then error, free from rhetorick's tinsel view'd,
 Shall make men blush at what they long pursu'd;
 And wondering nations, who with stupid gaze
 Follow'd wild metcours through a trackless maze,
 With penitential awe too late revere
 That counsel which they once refus'd to hear:
 Millions shall cry, while gall'd by slavery's chain,
 " This had we shun'd, had FOX not spoke in vain;
 " This had we shun'd:—but passion, urg'd by pride,
 " Mock'd the calm voice of reason's steady guide;
 " Follow'd ambition's vain delusive charms,
 " When rashness led by folly rush'd to arms:
 " Still had we liv'd unfetter'd, unopprest,
 " Blessing our Country—by our Country blest;

“ Still undisturb’d in peaceful valleys play’d,
 “ Had THY prophetic wisdom been obey’d!”

Ah! while these little Islands yet remain
 A doubtful refuge from the Oppressor’s chain;
 While yet unaw’d thy recent loss we mourn,
 And the heart’s tears bedew thy sacred urn,
 Let tardy penitence to Heaven atone
 For errors, which, alas! were all our own:
 Let us, appall’d by thy untimely death,
 Catch inspiration from thy parting breath;
 And, while remembrance cherishes the gleam
 Whose light dispell’d ambition’s feverish dream,
 Retrieve our faults, if yet ’tis not too late,
 And still avert th’ impending shaft of Fate!

Though clos’d for ever be that piercing eye
 Which saw effects in embryo causes lie;
 Though mute the voice, which spoke but to dispense
Prophetic reason and unerring sense;
 In lasting records may its accents live,
 And counsel still with wonted wisdom give;
 Still, unsubdu’d by censure or applause,
 Direct our efforts in the general cause;
 The weak invigorate, the rash control,
 Connect the parts, and animate the whole.

But what bold hand th’ adventurous task shall dare?
 Where HE felt doubt, what heart shall not despair?
 Who shall ambition’s latent wiles unfold?
 Who the firm shield against corruption hold?

Who round the sword the olive still entwine,
 And dauntless vigour with mild temper join?
 Who, mid the rocks, the sea-worn vessel guide,
 While o'er it thundering breaks the boisterous tide?
 What now is left for wearied Hope to try?
 Say, to what Pilot can she now apply?

Alike all ages, nations, states, and climes
 Abound in talents fit for common times ;
 Pageants of office, who with starch grimace
 Display the garb of sense in pomp of face ;
 Who, wise in forms, to forms alone attend ;
 And, busy in the means, neglect the end ;
 Who, in their little circle's narrow bound,
 Think they move forward, while they're moving round ;
 And, dreading innovation, still pursue
 The beaten track, when all around is new.
 Idols of court, and puppets of debate,
 Awhile they deck the pantomime of state ;
 Like bubbles float upon the tide of power,
 And shine the glittering meteors of an hour.

But genius, choicest gift of favouring Heaven,
 Once in a thousand years is scarcely given :
 Pure mental essence, of celestial birth,
 It rarely mixes with the dross of earth,
 To show creation on a nobler plan,
 And give the world Heaven's model of a man.
 Before it Science, Art, and Learning bend ;
 Through all at once its radiant lights extend ;

Scorning the aids which humbler minds require;
 It mounts spontaneous in electric fire;
 Intuitively pierces each disguise,
 And drags to light each truth that hidden lies;
 In native energy serenely strong,
 Pours the full tide of eloquence along;
 Prepared alike in every mode to shine,
 To guide a senate, or to point a line;
 Empires to rule, and armies to direct,
 Or metaphysic fallacies detect;
 Aloft to soar on fancy's eagle wing,
 Or dive self-thought in learning's deepest spring,
 Gilding its track with wisdom's purest ray,
 Th' ethereal light of intellectual day.

Such light was thine, O FOX! in thee alone
 With undiminish'd splendor still it shone
 From earliest youth, till life's expiring flame
 Reluctantly forsook thy wasted frame,
 Superior still to all—and e'en in death
 Its brightness glimmer'd in thy parting breath:
 In life's last ebb the Statesman's wisdom flow'd;
 In thought's last gleam the Patriot's vigour glow'd;
 Nor pain nor terror mov'd his steady mind;
 The pain HE felt, was pity for mankind.

Thus born with talents every state to fit,
 To shine the Statesman, Scholar, Sage, and Wit;
 Whate'er ambition prompted to perform,
 And steer triumphant thro' its wildest storm;

To glare a meteor, or a comet blaze,
 And dazzle nations with disastrous rays ;
Innate benignity of soul restrain'd
 Each adverse power, and wisdom's rule maintain'd ;
 Which firm amid contending factions stood,
 Sooth'd passion's storms, and stay'd the tide of blood.
 While stubborn pride, with ineffective rage,
 Still kindled wars it knew not how to wage,
 And brib'd weak states to give their all away
 To Britain's deadliest foes for British pay ;
 HE whose vast genius, with successful aim,
 Had seiz'd secure the bloodstain'd wreath of fame,
 Despis'd each selfish triumph, and pursu'd
 No lure of glory, but his Country's good.

But not the Statesman's toils, the Patriot's fame,
 The suffrage of the Muse alone must claim :
 'Tis in familiar life's domestic cares
 That mild affection all the bosom bares ;
 'Tis in warm friendship's gayly social hour
 The mask's thrown by, too often worn in power.
 'Tis then deep Statesmen act no studied part ;
 But speak the genuine dictates of the heart ;
 Praise without guile, and blame without control ;
 Laugh the heart's laugh, and open all the soul.

And here let grateful memory bring to view
 Scenes, which, alas ! it never can renew ;
 When all the bright effulgence of His mind
 Through mildest, gentlest, simplest manners shin'd ;

When, only anxious to instruct and please,
 The Statesman's sense assum'd the Courtier's ease;
 And all-commanding talent lower'd its tone,
 That feeble minds might not despise their own.
 No pomp of speech, in learning's garb array'd,
 Dazzled the ignorant, the weak dismay'd;
 No pointed sentence of sarcastic wit
 The unoffending or defenceless hit;
 No proud display of what His mind contain'd
 Abash'd the timid, or the meek restrain'd;
 No gawdy rhetorick, with selfish aim,
 In private converse, courted public fame;
 No quaint allusion, with ambiguous sense,
 To blushing modesty e'er gave offence;
 No prim conceit, in foppish neatness drest,
 No hoarded repartee, or studied jest,
 Slyly conceal'd, in watchful ambush lay
 Till apt occasion prompted its display.

Above each trick of art His genius tower'd,
 And intellect's full tide spontaneous pour'd;
 To embellish truth with unforc'd effort sought;
 With observation just and vigorous thought;
 With sense profound, in richest fancy drest;
 With learning's stores, in purest taste exprest;
 Deep and yet clear its copious currents roll'd
 Their amber waves o'er beds of native gold.

Whether the Politician's sense reveal'd
 Events in pregnant causes long conceal'd,

The complicated scroll of time unroll'd ;
 And, too prophetic ! Europe's fate foretold :
 Whether the Critic oped his ample store,
 And spread profuse the feast of Grecian lore ;
 Or, playfully redundant, scatter'd round
 The flowers which fancy cull'd on fairy ground :
 If pleas'd in metaphysic maze to tread,
 And trace coy science to its fountain head,
 Philosophy disclos'd the springs of mind,
 Unravel'd thought, and analys'd mankind ;
 Alike the varying stream abundant flow'd,
 Alike the clearness of its fountain show'd :
 While still, in each effusion of his mind,
 Appear'd the heart's warm glow—affections kind ;—
 That firm and proud integrity of soul
 Which knew no selfish passion's base control ;
 Truth undisguis'd, in native charms adorn'd,
 Which, unobtrusive, all concealment scorn'd ;
 Alike averse to flatter or offend,
 And never captious, though untaught to bend ;
 Honest ambition, whose unbiass'd aim
 Was to deserve, not win the smile of fame ;
 Which ask'd no favour, courted no assent,
 Nor e'er profess'd what was not fully meant ;
 The powerful knave and wealthy blockhead scorn'd ;
 But cherish'd all whom real worth adorn'd ;
 Which through the paths of glory still pursu'd
 One only object—universal good :
 Which health, and ease, and life itself resign'd,
 To save his Country, and to serve Mankind.

While o'er His tomb desponding millions moan,
 Who in His fate anticipate their own ;
 For HIM, though borne on an untimely bier,
 Philosophy shall dry Affection's tear :
 For what, alas ! can length of days bestow,
 But lengthen'd misery and lengthen'd woe ?
 'Tis but in pain to draw precarious breath,
 Shivering beneath th' impending dart of Death ;
 Benumb'd in dull forgetfulness to sleep,
 Or for expiring friends to wake and weep ;
 Like some old oak, upon a naked strand,
 The relict of a fallen grove to stand ;
 Upon whose wither'd, bald, and blighted head,
 The damps of every passing cloud are shed ;
 From whose bare trunk, now mouldering in decay,
 Each passing tempest tears some limb away ;
 Whose roots, expos'd beneath th' inclement sky,
 No more its vital nourishment supply :
 Th' incumbrance of the soil it falls at last,
 Th' unheeded victim of some wintry blast.

But though to Him the loss of life be small,
 What have not they to dread, who mourn His fall ?
 What have not they to dread, who still remain
 To hear the doleful clink of slavery's chain ;
 To see its low'ring clouds diffus'd around,
 In one wide waste creation to confound ?
 While all benumb'd in deathlike sleep obey
 One mighty Master's universal sway ;

From whose vindictive wrath no power can save,
No earthly refuge shelter—but the grave !

E'en Afric's sons, condemn'd in hopeless toil
To till, in torrid climes, th' unhealthful soil,
Their Patron's fall in dumb despair shall hear,
And drop, mid bloody sweats, the silent tear :
Wearied and spent, while o'er his aching head
Their hottest fires meridian sunbeams shed,
While ebbing life exudes at every pore,
And e'en the lash can now extort no more ;
The slave for Freedom's friend shall heave a groan,
And in His fate awhile forget his own.

And can then hope no distant comfort show ?
No future bliss irradiate present woe ?
Yes :—spite of all the cold narcotic lore
Which reason spreads where fancy loves to soar ;
Which holds in philosophic doubts confin'd
Each source of sentiment and spring of mind ;
What no deep search of science can unfold,
Shall modest faith with sacred awe behold ;
And teach, as through yon boundless space of skies
Worlds beyond worlds in endless myriads rise,
O'er each presiding emanations reign,
Direct their orbits and their fires maintain ;
While one Almighty universal soul
Lives in each part and regulates the whole ;
Bidding in infinite succession flow
Whatever beams above or breathes below ;

And, still advancing on from sphere to sphere,
 As intellectual brightness burns more clear,
 Th' ethereal efflux, till its splendors shine
 Pure and immortal as its source divine !

Then shall th' uncumber'd Spirit freely rove
 With those who, living, most deserv'd its love ;
 Whose virtues on the same broad basis stood
 Of private worth employ'd for publick good ;
 Who greatly acted, or who wisely thought,
 And for their Country's freedom toil'd or fought ;
 Who in the glorious cause each effort tried,
 And justly triumph'd, or unjustly died ;
 Who, to no sect's or party's views confin'd,
 Sought but the general welfare of mankind.
 Then in th' eternal mansions of the blest
 Shall good Timoleon welcome Thee his guest ;
 Approving Doria nod his hoary head,
 And wipe the tear o'er fallen Genoa shed ;
 While happier Washington shall feel the flame,
 He living felt, rekindle at thy name ;
 And, conscious of what few have understood,
 That to be truly great is to be good,
 Look down on despots, who shall blushing own,
 He best deserv'd, who dar'd despise a throne.
 With kindred warmth Epaminondas glows,
 While Solon's wisdom in soft numbers shows
 How all the Poet's elegance refin'd
 All that the Legislator's skill design'd.

Around, the intellectual feast to share,
 Congenial Spirits float in ambient air ;
 And garlands, gather'd from ambrosial bowers,
 Entwine with wreathes of amaranthine flowers.

Yet sure, triumphant o'er this nether world,
 Some ruling fiend his banners hath unfurl'd ;
 Who, in those fields, where guiltless thousands bled,
 And winged death on every bullet sped,
 Where wild promiscuous slaughter rag'd around,
 And purple torrents drench'd the thirsty ground,
 From civil vengeance join'd to hostile strife,
 Preserv'd secure its great Oppressor's life ;
 While HE, whose hand had check'd his lawless sway,
 Untimely falls in premature decay ;
 Just when distress had made his Country wise,
 And pressing danger oped its Rulers' eyes ;
 When taught, too late perhaps ! by errors past,
 They listen'd to the voice of truth at last ;
 Obey'd that counsel, which, obey'd when given,
 Had sooth'd the wrath, and stay'd the bolt of Heaven.

O may our late contrition yet prevail,
 And Heaven protect, where human succours fail !
 May that just Power, which claim'd HIM for its own,
 Propitious still in Freedom's cause be shown ;
 Preserve its glorious gift, nor take from man
 What best remains of his Creator's plan !

Then round THY tomb shall happy myriads raise
The song of gratitude and hymn of praise;
With liberal heart bestow what envious pride
To all THY virtues, living, long denied;
And, to the memory of THY genius just,
WITH GLORY'S RICHEST SPLENDORS CROWN THY BUST.

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